

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and surgical gloves, have dramatically exposed the vulnerabilities of global supply chains. After years of dependency on imports from China, the U.S. agricultural and economic sectors suffered tremendously amid the COVID-19 pandemic and have set the stage for domestic policy initiatives that seek to avoid a possible reoccurrence.

We want to bring to your attention that many industry executives and Members of Congress believe China is dumping PPE into the U.S. supply, noting that many imports are priced so low that there is little chance for domestic companies to survive. While China hoarded its exports during the beginning of the pandemic, forcing the U.S. to scramble for PPE, the opposite is now occurring. The New York Times reported that at least three U.S. companies have stopped producing masks and medical gowns and several others have scaled back production.

Fearing America's manufacturing independence, China began to dump masks on the U.S. market at well below actual costs. This has made it impossible for U.S. manufacturers to compete—and, as a result, 260 million American-made masks sit in U.S. warehouses unused today. If China continues to dump masks for a fraction of the costs of materials, the U.S. will be more dependent on China for PPE than before the pandemic. These trade practices threaten the viability of our industry and the welfare of Americans.

To develop a rounded understanding of the issue, we request written responses to the following questions:

- Since the FDA updated the EUA on February 18, 2021, how many non-National Institutes of Occupational Safety and Health approved respirators manufactured in China have been purchased by the U.S.?
- What percentage of PPE in the Strategic National Stockpile was imported from China?

- Does HHS have or intend to have a policy in place to incentivize U.S. production of PPE and support fully-U.S. public health supply chains by purchasing critical medical supplies for the Strategic National Stockpile and other departmental needs from U.S. sources consistent with the Berry Amendment? If not, please explain in detail why HHS would prefer to purchase these products from China and other foreign sources.
- Do you plan to lift the Emergency Use Authorization for non-U.S. based manufacturers?

Although global trade is essential to a high-functioning economy, domestic production of such critical supplies is equally as essential. Under the present conditions, American farmers and manufacturers are at risk of losing their jobs and businesses. The American economy and the wellbeing of hard-working Americans are in jeopardy; therefore, we request any information available on current or future plans to protect the American economy from the threat of China.

Sincerely,



Eric A. "Rick" Crawford
Member of Congress



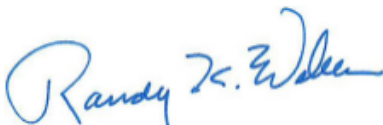
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